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## **Sen. Kuipers praises passage of K-12 education budget**

**LANSING** – Sen. Wayne Kuipers, R-Holland, commended today's Senate passage of the budget bill that affects K-12 education.

The deal brokered by the governor and legislative leaders protects Michigan's schoolchildren from further budget cuts despite how the state is coming out of an economic downturn, said Kuipers, who chairs the Senate Education Committee.

The agreement keeps the state's foundation aid payment to public schools at its current level of \$6,700 per pupil while ensuring growing school districts receive sufficient funding to meet increased demand.

"Michigan schoolchildren shouldn't be hurt because of the state's budget deficit," Kuipers said. "We've made K-12 education a top priority, and we're not cutting the state funding school districts receive."

The overall budget agreement closes a projected \$1.045 billion deficit. The agreement sets state general-fund spending at \$8.7 billion in 2005. Eliminating the deficit is achieved through \$450 million in new revenue from increased cigarette and casino taxes, and nearly \$595 million in spending cuts and budget accounting adjustments.

The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the education budget this week.

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